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14. ABSTRACT

Unmanned aerial vehicles and other emerging technologies are changing the face of the modern battlefield, especially in the irregular warfare (IW) environment. However, while these tools have allowed tactical forces to identify, track, and kill high-value targets in Iraq and Afghanistan, the missions have also become the focus of operational intelligence functional support in many instances. In short, operational intelligence support to IW has been organized to the technology rather than to the task. This raises three particular issues. First, the missions are primarily kinetic, thus best suited for tactical forces. Second, the missions are not the most appropriate for IW from the operational perspective. Third, and related to the first two, intelligence resources are limited, and the U.S. can't afford to waste them on the wrong mission. IW presents a complex and varied landscape, in which forces face an enemy who is very competent, but who uses tactics that are unfamiliar and run counter to current training. The U.S. military can't fall back on its conventional warfare methods, but must learn new techniques. Emerging technologies can help, but intelligence professionals at the operational level must not allow themselves to be distracted by the tools and lose sight of the overall mission.

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OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN IRREGULAR WARFARE: ORGANIZED TO THE TASK OR TO THE TECHNOLOGY?

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

23 October 2009

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Abstract

Unmanned aerial vehicles and other emerging technologies are changing the face of the modern battlefield, especially in the irregular warfare (IW) environment. However, while these tools have allowed tactical forces to identify, track, and kill high-value targets in Iraq and Afghanistan, the missions have also become the focus of operational intelligence functional support in many instances. In short, operational intelligence support to IW has been organized to the technology rather than to the task. This raises three particular issues. First, the missions are primarily kinetic, thus best suited for tactical forces. Second, the missions are not the most appropriate for IW from the operational perspective. Third, and related to the first two, intelligence resources are limited, and the U.S. can't afford to waste them on the wrong mission. IW presents a complex and varied landscape, in which forces face an enemy who is very competent, but who uses tactics that are unfamiliar and run counter to current training. The U.S. military can't fall back on its conventional warfare methods, but must learn new techniques. Emerging technologies can help, but intelligence professionals at the operational level must not allow themselves to be distracted by the tools and lose sight of the overall mission.

OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN IRREGULAR WARFARE: ORGANIZED TO THE TASK OR TO THE TECHNOLOGY?

INTRODUCTION

Irregular warfare (IW) has been part of the military mission set for millennia, dating to at least the sixth century BC, when Scythia used hit and run tactics to cause problems for the Persians and others.[1] The Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, coupled with the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, led to the rise of the nation-state and development of professional armies. These armies focused primarily on the task of countering each other in what is now referred to as conventional warfare. However, when the U.S. emerged as the sole super-power after the Cold War, other states and non-state actors were forced to resort to alternative means to achieve their political goals, including terrorism and insurgency. These activities constitute a large part of what is known as irregular warfare,[2] and defeating that threat, via counterterrorism (CT) and counter-insurgency (COIN) operations, has been a mainstay of the U.S. military since the mid-2000s.

During the Cold War, constellations of satellites and fleets of airborne and naval reconnaissance and surveillance platforms were deployed to track Warsaw Pact capabilities threatening the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Western powers. Arguably, that intelligence capability was a significant contributor to the favorable end of the Cold War

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[1] John Masson Smith, Jr., "The Barbarian Invaders", The Silkroad Foundation, http://www.silk-road.com/artl/barbarian.shtml (accessed 2 October 2009).

[2] U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review Report* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, January 2009), 10.

for the U.S.[3] However, it has proven less useful against the irregular enemy, who is elusive and not tied to geographic boundaries or troop concentrations. Effective intelligence on this type of enemy must be more flexible and support a more compressed intelligence cycle. To provide that kind of intelligence, new systems, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), have been developed and fielded, and have had an immediate effect on the battlefield.

However, evidence suggests these new intelligence systems and capabilities have not been used in the most effective and efficient manner to support the theater and operational commander. Rather, operational-level and geographic combatant command (GCC) directors of intelligence (J2), have focused on maximizing the use of the technological advancements for the benefit of near-term tactical operations, but potential detriment of long-term operational requirements. In short, they have organized to the technology rather than to the irregular warfare task. If true, this could impact the efficacy of future operational intelligence support to IW by distracting the effort away from the core operational requirement. UAVs and other new technologies have proven extremely valuable to the tactical fight, so much so that significant operational and GCC J2 time and energy have been spent supporting such missions. This action has taken away from what really needs to be done, which is to help the joint force commander (JFC) better understand the insurgent and IW fighter and develop appropriate CT and COIN campaign and operational plans.

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[3] Matthew Aid, "National Security Agency Releases History of Cold War Intelligence Activities", NSA Electronic Briefing Book No. 260, 14 November 2008, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB260/index.htm (accessed 2 October 2009); and

"At Cold War's End: US Intelligence on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1989-1991", Central Intelligence Agency, Center for the Study of Intelligence, 16 March 2007, https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/at-cold-wars-end-us-intelligence-on-the-soviet-union-and-eastern-europe-1989-1991/art-1.html (accessed 2 October 2009).

DISCUSSION

A. Traditional Role of Intelligence.

Operational art theory describes operational intelligence as "the product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of available information on potential opponents or enemies."[4] Specifically, operational intelligence supports "planning, preparation, and execution of a campaign or major operation."[5] Unlike the tactical focus of intelligence on the current fight, operational intelligence must look at the enemy situation weeks or months in the future, to help the JFC understand the enemy and be able to anticipate enemy strategic and operational actions. Analysis of critical capabilities and critical vulnerabilities, for both friendly and enemy forces, is key to this mission.

Doctrine mirrors theory in this regard. Joint Publication (JP) 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*, states that the mission of operational intelligence is to provide the JFC with information during campaign planning to identify the enemy's critical vulnerabilities, centers of gravity, critical nodes, probable courses of action, and high-value targets (HVT).[6] Doctrine further describes a number of operational intelligence functions, including one that is of particular interest to this paper: "In CT/COIN, pay greater attention to stability operations, with focus on political, economic, and social factors."[7]

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[4] Milan Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2007), VIII-25.

[5] ibid.

[6] Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), *Joint Intelligence*, Joint Publication (JP) 2-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 22 June 2007), I-21.

[7] ibid., I-22.

With the exception of the one brief reference in JP 2-0, doctrine and theory are mostly silent about operational intelligence tasking in the irregular environment. For example, the *Universal Joint Task List* describes operational intelligence tasks that are almost entirely based on conventional combat requirements.[8] Irregular warfare doesn't fit the standard range of military operations either, as defined by JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*. IW is not military engagement, security cooperation, or deterrence on the low end; nor is it major operations or campaigns on the high end. It's also not "a single small-scale, limited-duration operation or a significant part of a major operation of extended duration involving combat", the definition of crisis response and limited contingency planning.[9] Arguably, IW fits none of those definitions very well, but spans all of them to some degree.

B. Intelligence Requirements for Irregular Warfare.

Though formal doctrine is somewhat lacking in the area of operational intelligence support to IW, there are some references. The new JP 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, published in October 2009, states that "in IW, the conflict focuses more on control or influence over, and the support of, a relevant population and not on the control of an adversary's forces or territory."[10] It further states that "intelligence drives COIN operations and successful COIN operations generate additional intelligence."[11] The joint Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24 and Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency*, published in December 2006, adds that "effective COIN operations are

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[8] CJCS, *Universal Joint Task List*, Change 1, CJCS Manual 3500.04D (Washington, DC: CJCS, 15 September 2006), B-C-C-33 to B-C-C-50.

[9] CJCS, *Joint Operations*, Change 1, JP 3-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 13 February 2008), I-8 to I-9.

[10] CJCS, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, JP 3-24 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 5 October 2009), I-6.

[11] ibid., V-1.

decentralized, and higher commanders owe it to their subordinates to push as many capabilities as possible down to their level."[12] The operational intelligence focus needed to drive tactical operations must be concerned with ethnic, tribal, and religious ties, society, language, cultural interests, and all other elements of the population—the so-called "human terrain."[13] While individual tactical units can do this in their immediate area, the operational and GCC J2 must integrate that data to build a picture across the entire operational area and theater. Only by understanding the people will the COIN mission have a chance to succeed.

Other sources reinforce this point. A RAND Corporation study, *Counterinsurency in Iraq (2003-2006)*, while pointing out various tactical successes, states that the key to COIN operations is human intelligence (HUMINT) and informant networks.[14] Another RAND report, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, reiterates that fact, stating that the population must be the source of information on the insurgency.[15] U.S. forces in Afghanistan have used an array of technological systems, including UAVs, as well as HUMINT sources. But the RAND study concludes that "HUMINT usually provides the majority of actionable intelligence, especially at the tactical level."[16] These studies clearly give the edge to human-derived over technology-derived intelligence for support to IW.

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[12] Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*, Field Manual (FM) 3-24, and Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 15 December 2006), 1-26.

[13] David Rohde, "Army Enlists Anthropology in War Zones", *New York Times*, 5 October 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/05/world/asia/05afghan.html?_r=1&incamp=article_popular_4&pagewanted=all (accessed 2 October 2009).

[14] Bruce R. Pirnie and Edward O'Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq (2003-2006)*, RAND Counterinsurgency Study, Volume 2 (Washington, DC: National Defense Research Institute, 2008), 97.

[15] Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, RAND Counterinsurgency Study, Volume 4 (Washington, DC: National Defense Research Institute, 2008), 99.

[16] ibid., 99-100.

On Point II, covering U.S. Army participation in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) during 2003-2005, comes to a similar conclusion about the COIN effort in Iraq. At that time, the operational command in Iraq was Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF)-7, commanded by Army Brig Gen Martin Dempsey.[17] What the Army learned during 2003-2004 was that COIN "stood the relationship between intelligence and operations on its head."[18] Rather than intelligence driving operations, often operations were planned for the sole purpose of gathering intelligence, which would then lead to additional operations. The key factor for this change was "the Coalition's efforts to adapt and augment its traditional intelligence assets and methods so that tactical units could act in a decisive way."[19] Another by-product of this operation was the start of a fundamental change in Army intelligence, where tactical units, rather than having intelligence pushed to them from above, conducted their own intelligence in support of future tactical missions.[20]

In his 30 August 2009 report on the status of the war in Afghanistan, Army Gen Stanley A. McChrystal, commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, states that "a focus by ISAF intelligence on kinetic targeting and a failure to bring together what is known about the political and social realm have hindered ISAF's comprehension of the critical aspects of Afghan Society."[21] General

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[17] General Dempsey received his fourth star on 8 December 2008 and is currently Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, VA.

[18] Donald P. Wright and Timothy R. Reese, *On Point II, Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, May 2003-January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, US Army Combined Arms Center, June 2008), 191.

[19] ibid.

[20] ibid., 197.

[21] Stanley A. McChrystal, "Commander's Initial Assessment", Commander NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, and U.S. Forces, Afghanistan, Report to the Secretary of Defense (Kabul, Afghanistan: HQ ISAF, 30 August 2009), 2-10.

McChrystal asserts that ISAF has spent too much time and energy on the kinetic aspect of the fight and all but ignored what is truly important: winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. The people are the strategic and operational objective.[22] From an operational intelligence stand-point, the focus of effort should be on the human terrain issue, rather than preoccupation with tactical missions.

C. Integration of New Capabilities.

Without question, UAVs and other technology have brought great capabilities to the battlefield, and resulted in many successes. Air Force Maj Gen Charles J. Dunlap, Jr.,[23] in *Parameters*, noted that long-dwell UAVs are revolutionizing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) in support of COIN.[24] Army Gen David H. Petraeus,[25] when he was commander of Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I), called UAVs the top hardware priority in Iraq.[26] These devices are transforming tactical intelligence gathering, and are having a major impact in the way airpower is used in support of COIN operations. The ability to selectively track and target individuals and provide situational awareness in support of operations is a capability that was only available in a limited fashion prior to the advent of UAVs.

At the GCC and operational levels, J2s were quick to integrate these new tools into the arsenal. During the initial stages of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) in late

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[22] ibid., 2-12.

[23] General Dunlap is currently the Deputy Judge Advocate General, Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, Washington, DC.

[24] Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., "Making Revolutionary Change: Airpower in COIN Today", *Parameters*, Summer 2008, 54.

[25] General Petraeus is currently the Commander, U.S. Central Command, MacDill AFB, FL.

[26] Matthew Cox and Gina Cavallero, "Petraeus: ISR Gear is Key to Success," *Army Times*, 11 April 2008, http://www.armytimes.com/news/2008/04/military_petraeus_gear_042108/ (accessed 30 September 2009).

2001, for example, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) formed a Time-Sensitive Targeting Cell within its Joint Intelligence Center.[27] This cell was responsible for monitoring live UAV feeds from theater to identify, track, and target critical enemy personnel, their movements, safe houses, and contacts, leading to tactical action against those targets. Later renamed the High-Value Targeting Cell, this capability remained a staple at the GCC and joint task force (JTF) level throughout OEF, OIF, and follow-on stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in the years following.

Use of UAVs is not without its controversy. The Air Force position is that UAVs should be controlled centrally, with decentralized execution so as to maximize support for the JFC's highest priority missions.[28] Even as production lines continue to build new UAV platforms, such as the Air Force's Predator, Reaper, and Global Hawk, the number available in any given theater still lags the demand, so they must be used efficiently in order to be fully effective. Since all four services use UAVs, the Air Force position is that they, the Air Force, should be the service executive agent for all medium- and high-altitude UAVs so as to streamline acquisition, increase combat effectiveness through development of concepts of operation, and enhance interoperability.[29]

The Army believes field commanders should have direct control of UAV assets, such as their Sky Warrior, as opposed to being centrally controlled by the Air Force.[30] The Army's

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[27] Author's experience.

[28] David A. Deptula, "Testimony", House, *Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Programs, Hearing before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces Hearing*, 19 April 2007, 7-8.

[29] ibid., 3.

[30] U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), "Defense Acquisitions: Better Acquisition Strategy Needed for Successful Development of the Army's Warrior Unmanned Aircraft System" (Washington, DC: GAO-06-593, May 2006), 2.

rationale is that tactical commanders need the organic assets, and joint assets simply cannot be made available to the tactical commander in the right time, location, or numbers to meet the need. Army Lt Gen Raymond T. Odierno,[31] when he was commander of Army's III Corps, said that control of UAVs should be decentralized, pushed to the lowest tactical level. Assets would be held at the corps level, but apportioned to the divisions for execution.[32]

In the meantime, air strikes seeking Taliban and al Qaeda targets in Afghanistan, whether successful or not in a military sense, have often resulted in civilian casualties, according to General McChrystal.[33] These tragedies have been played up by the enemy, who is exceptionally good at spinning events in their favor on the worldwide stage. Upon taking over as commander in Afghanistan, General McChrystal made it one of his top priorities to reverse this public relations trend, recognizing the main battle as being for the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. He stated that more ISR assets are needed, particularly via UAVs, to drastically improve targeting precision and reduce collateral damage.[34]

D. Counter-Arguments.

The activities described above have without a doubt proven successful at the tactical level. As of July 2009, UAVs were flying 34 missions per day in Iraq and Afghanistan, transmitting over 500 hours of video per day, both to analysts and in some cases directly to

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[31] General Odierno received his fourth star on 16 September 2008 and is currently the Commanding General, Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I).

[32] Raymond T. Odierno, Nichoel E. Brooks, and Francesco P. Mastracchio, "ISR Evolution in the Iraqi Theater", *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 50 (Third Quarter 2008): 52-53.

[33] Noah Shachtman, "New Top General Could Mean Changes for Afghan Airstrikes", *Wired Magazine*, June 5, 2009, http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/06/new-top-general-could-mean-changes-for-afghan-airstrikes/ (accessed 30 September 2009).

[34] ibid.

soldiers on the ground.[35] This data has directly supported the targeting, tracking, and killing of a number of key terrorists and insurgents, and other kinetic attacks. But the data has also contributed to operational and theater intelligence requirements in several ways.

First, long-dwell ISR assets have provided intelligence and counter-terrorism analysts the unprecedented ability to track individuals for extended periods of time—days and weeks—to learn their patterns of behavior, find out who they associate with, and allow analysts to build and flesh-out networks. Network and nodal analysis based on such data is critically important in enabling intelligence analysts at the operational level to dig into the complex layers of terrorist and insurgent cells in order to neutralize them.

Further, many of the targets of these tactical missions were high-ranking members of terrorist organizations, including al Qaeda, the Taliban, al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), and others. As such, killing or capturing these senior leaders can be argued to have significance at the operational or strategic level. For example, the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in June 2006 arguably had an operational impact on the COIN operation in Iraq.[36] Were the U.S. to successfully capture or kill Usama bin Ladin, that might well have strategic political importance in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). It is well within the purview of the operational intelligence staff to target key terrorist and insurgent leaders such as these.

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[35] *New York Times*, "Predator Drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)", 24 July 2009, http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/u/unmanned_aerial_vehicles/index.html (accessed 27 September 2009).

[36] Ellen Knickmeyer and Jonathan Finer, "Insurgent Leader Al-Zarqawi Killed in Iraq." *The Washington Post*, 8 June 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/08/AR2006060800114.html (accessed 30 September 2009).

Finally, the popularity of UAVs across all four services is well established, and the DoD has a number of acquisition programs in place.[37] In addition to Air Force and Army systems discussed above, the Navy is looking to expand its program by adding a number of small tactical systems.[38] Even other nations, such as South Korea, are looking to beef up their ISR capability using UAVs.[39] However, despite these initiatives, the demand for long-dwell assets still outstrips the ability of the services to provide them, especially in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility. These high-demand/low-density resources, if they are to be used in the most effective manner, should be under some kind of centralized control. Placing them at the operational or GCC level would provide the best opportunity to ensure the UAVs are employed against the key operational and theater objectives.

ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS

The challenges of irregular warfare have spurred the American defense industry, in typical fashion, to develop new technologies to take the fight to the enemy, wherever he may be. First used operationally in the 1990s, UAVs now number in the hundreds, and the future could see this trend continue with the advent of micro-UAVs and other follow-on technologies.[40] The introduction of these systems onto the battlefield has had a profound effect on the way the U.S. military has conducted CT and COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Where traditional ISR collection assets have been unable to provide complete

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[37] GAO, "Force Structure: Improved Strategic Planning Can Enhance DOD's Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Efforts" (Washington, DC: GAO-04-0342, March 2004), 7-9.

[38] David A. Fulghum, "U.S. Navy Juggles UAVs Large and Small", *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report: Aviation Week*, Vol. 231, No. 32 (14 August 2009): 3.

[39] Fulghum, "Future Force", *Aviation Week & Space Technology*; Vol. 170, No. 26 (29 June 2009): 49.

[40] *New York Times*, "Predator Drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles."

information, UAVs have filled the gaps. Long-dwell ISR assets have allowed U.S. personnel to identify, track, target, and kill a number of key insurgents and terrorist leaders, while minimizing civilian casualties or collateral damage.

This capability seems tailor-made for the irregular warfare environment, and U.S. forces have adopted the tools as quickly as they could be fielded. Nor were the tools failures, as they were employed time and again to achieve success, on the streets of Baghdad, and in the mountains of Afghanistan. In fact, the operations were so successful, they became the focus of the U.S. intelligence campaign, and still are to a large degree. Intelligence operations at the GCC and operational level, while still focusing their main organizational effort on the theater and operational issues, have nevertheless carved out cells to monitor UAV full-motion video streams, and assigned teams of analysts to develop high-value targets to be attacked, based on that data and other sources.[41]

These efforts were successful up to a point. Certainly, the targets identified were destroyed or killed with a high rate of success. UAV video and other sensor data, analyzed and fused by intelligence analysts at USCENTCOM, MNF-I, and ISAF, were used to direct special forces teams, aircraft, and other strike capabilities to each target, mostly with great effect. However, as IW operations continue across the globe, there are three fundamental flaws with "business as usual" that must be discussed.

(1) First, the missions as carried out are primarily kinetic, and thus tactical in nature. The services would argue that the correct use of the technology would be for UAVs to be operated by service tactical units, feeding data to tactical intelligence organizations, leading to targeting information for tactical teams or the weaponized UAVs themselves. As stated,

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[41] Author's experience.

each of the services have embraced UAVs in just this manner, and each is very much interested in maximizing the availability of such assets to its tactical units. This would be a doctrinally sound use of the technology. However, the same cannot be said of GCC and operational J2 use of the same data for the same purpose. While operational intelligence has a responsibility to be the link between strategic and tactical intelligence,[42] and certainly must monitor tactical operations to assess their value to the overall operation, at the end of the day, these operations are still tactical, and best suited for tactical units. Kinetic operations such as these should remain in the purview of the tactical fight.

(2) Second, the tactical missions, though successful, are not the most important missions for irregular warfare at the operational level. In fact, in some cases they're irrelevant, or even counter-productive, considering the harm caused by collateral damage noted by General McChrystal. The U.S. has a long and distinguished history of fighting and winning conventional wars, but a less distinguished history fighting irregular wars, with notable failures in Viet Nam and Somalia. Arguably, one of the primary reasons for those failures is the desire to apply that which is best known—conventional warfare—to the problem. Kinetic attacks on HVTs tend to fall into that category, albeit on a smaller scale. Ultimately, these attacks will not lead to victory, in Iraq, Afghanistan, or any future irregular conflict. Instead, as specified in JP 3-24, FM 3-24, and other sources, the COIN battle at the operational level is over the hearts and minds of the populace.[43]

Operational intelligence support for that type of effort, in addition to being less viscerally satisfying, is much more difficult than the traditional intelligence support to kinetic

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[42] JP 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*, I-21.

[43] JP 3-24, III-12; and FM 3-24, A-5.

operations. Intelligence support must immerse itself in the human terrain equation, maximize use of HUMINT assets, make use of terrorist and insurgent network data to understand the insurgency's organization, methods, leadership, strengths, vulnerabilities, centers of gravity (if any), and probable courses of action, but also understand the local population and it's culture, relationships, families, needs, and what's important to it. This intelligence will allow the combatant commander and JFC to build viable operations or campaign plans to attack and ultimately defeat the insurgency by winning over the population.

(3) Finally, time and resources available to support the operational intelligence function are finite and limited. The more time and energy the GCC and operational-level J2 staffs spend supporting the kinetic HVT tactical missions, the less will be available to support the true IW operational missions. The factor of time is critically important in IW, since the adversary is typically very agile and quickly adapts to changes in friendly force tactics and methods. To stay ahead of the enemy's decision cycle, the intelligence capability must be streamlined as much as possible, in all phases. One way to do that is to let the tactical units do their mission, and have the operational level focus on what's important to it. The factor of force is also important, since in any contingency there are almost always fewer personnel available than needed. In a crisis, a GCC staff will be augmented by reservists and individual augmentees (IA) from the services or other combatant commands. A JTF might be formed from an existing headquarters staff and likewise augmented with IAs or reservists. These augmentees represent expenditures of manpower being made by the services and supporting commands in direct support of the contingency operation. It is therefore the responsibility of the gaining organization to use those personnel in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The best way to do that is for the organization to focus on the

mission that is appropriate for its level, i.e. operational, and leave tactical operations to the service units.

Therefore, the author concludes that, despite the clear tactical successes of UAV-driven HVT missions, and despite the fact that some of the missions achieved operational or strategic significance due to the nature of the target, and despite the fact that there is value in centralized control of scarce resources, the thesis holds. GCC and operational-level J2s have been organized to the technology rather than to the task.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To correct these deficiencies, the author proposes three recommendations and one supporting action. The latter provides peripheral support for the proposed recommendations in the areas of force structure and technology, and is provided for completeness.

A. Proposed Recommendations.

(1) The GCCs and operational-level J2 organizations should reexamine their intelligence priorities with respect to support for CT and COIN operations. The overall mission of operational intelligence is to provide the JFC or combatant commander with information on the enemy to allow him or her to prepare adequate operation or campaign plans. The most fundamental element of that knowledge is an understanding of one's own national, theater, and operational objectives, from which all other intelligence and operational requirements will flow. In the irregular warfare environment, the operational objectives are going to be more closely aligned with the population than with any enemy troop concentrations, and that is where the GCC and operational-level J2 should focus their efforts and energies. What is the nature of the insurgency? What are the issues that exist with the

population, which the insurgents are attempting to exploit? What are the methods the insurgents are using to take their message to the people? How can the JFC or combatant commander prepare an operation or campaign plan to counter those efforts? These are the questions that are of key significance to the operational level intelligence analyst. Some kinetic operations will no doubt still be required, but they should be planned and executed at the tactical level, with coordination at the operational level to ensure they are in line with operational objectives.

(2) The services and combat support agencies should continue to expand existing HUMINT capability in theater, with particular attention to developing sources in those countries where the U.S. is fighting insurgents or terrorists now, and where such fights can be anticipated in the future. While this area has been the beneficiary of significant funding and support in recent years,[44] and great strides have been made, more is needed. The ability of UAVs and other technologies to serve as intelligence gathering systems cannot be overstated, but they can't take the place of actual human-derived intelligence, especially at the operational level. Recent experience, such as the RAND studies cited above, has shown that HUMINT is often the best source of information on insurgents and population issues. Only by tapping these human sources will the JFC be able to truly evaluate the situation, determine what the issues are, and allow him or her to achieve the objective of winning the hearts and minds of the people. This can't be done from a remotely piloted vehicle overhead.

(3) The Department of Defense (DoD) and Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) should revise joint intelligence doctrine to better reflect the realities of irregular warfare and the modern

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[44] House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *House Intelligence Committee Approves Funding for Intelligence Operations and Critical Oversight*, HR 5959, 8 May 2008.

battlefield. The vast majority of current doctrine at the joint and service level is concerned with how the U.S. military will fight a conventional war. A few good documents have been published in recent years, such as FM 3-24 in 2006 and the new JP 3-24 in 2009, and these are welcome additions to the intellectual fold. However, even the new COIN guides fall short of truly addressing the modern IW landscape from the intelligence perspective. Specifically, the JP 2-series documents need to be revised to provide better guidance for theater and operational intelligence support in the IW environment: how to conduct joint intelligence preparation of the operating environment (JIPOE), planning factors for CT and COIN operations, applicability of the intelligence cycle to IW, etc. These processes represent a significant departure from traditional intelligence support to conventional operations. Current doctrine is insufficient and should be updated.

B. Supporting Action.

The Joint Staff, U.S. Joint Forces Command, U.S. Strategic Command, the GCCs, the services, and the combat support agencies need to resolve the conflicted issues of UAV control. Currently, UAVs are employed in two distinct ways: as ISR platforms, primarily at the operational and GCC level; and as kinetic attack platforms, primarily at the tactical level. As ISR platforms, UAVs provide a very valuable tool to the operational and GCC J2 for the reasons discussed above: ability to conduct long-term surveillance of operationally significant targets in order to build networks and conduct nodal analysis.

As UAVs evolved to include weaponry, the availability of the kinetic payload at the operational level arguably introduced the very temptation for their use that is the thesis of this paper. However, the services, who clearly see the tactical value of the weaponized UAVs, are working to integrate them into their inventories as quickly as possible. The Air

Force, for example, proposed a plan to eventually phase out the ISR-oriented Predator platform in favor of the attack-focused Reaper.[45] That plan, if approved, would increase the kinetic capability available to the tactical units, but potentially decrease the ISR capability to the operational level. It would also continue to put kinetic capability under control of the operational or GCC J2, propagating the issue described in this paper.

One solution might be to decouple the platforms along functional tracks based on objectives. Rather than building multi-purpose systems, provide separate platforms focused on either kinetic attack or ISR, tailored to the tactical or operational levels, respectively. In the Air Force example just mentioned, that would mean continuing to produce Predators to support the operational level, while deploying Reapers at the tactical level.

FINAL REMARKS

UAVs and other emerging technologies are changing the face of the modern battlefield, especially in the irregular warfare environment. Without question, these tools have allowed tactical forces to identify, find, track, target, and kill a number of high-value targets throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. However, in many cases, the missions have become the focus of intelligence effort at the GCC and operational level as well. In fact, they have organized around the technology rather than to the task. This paper presented three primary issues with that situation.

(1) HVT missions are primarily tactical in nature. While some targets do have an operational or strategic significance, they are planned and executed by tactical units,

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[45] *Air Force Magazine*, "Predator Out, Reaper In", 8 May 2009, http://www.airforce-magazine.com/DRArchive/Pages/2009/May%202009/May%2008%202009/PredatorOut.ReaperIn.aspx (accessed 20 October 2009).

primarily for tactical purposes. GCC and operational-level J2s should not focus on these missions, but instead let the tactical units conduct them as they are trained to do.

(2) The HVT missions are the wrong operational focus for IW. Instead of worrying about kinetic attacks, GCC and operational-level J2s should focus on those things that are of paramount importance to achieving their operational objectives; i.e. winning the hearts and minds of the people.

(3) Time and resources spent on the wrong mission distracts the GCC and operational-level J2 from the real IW focus. Intelligence manpower and systems are finite, and prudence dictates they not be wasted by spending time and energy on the wrong mission.

Irregular Warfare presents a complex and varied landscape requiring unfamiliar methods against a very adaptable enemy. The U.S. can't fall back on what it does best, but must learn new techniques, procedures, and methods. In some cases, emerging technologies are giving intelligence analysts tools to help do their job better. But they cannot allow themselves to be distracted by the tools and so lose sight of the overall mission.

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